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THE PLURAL FORMS OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN MODERN CHINESE

A Dissertation Presented

By

BAOYING QIU

Submitted to the Graduate School of the

University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment

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Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures

Asian Languages & Literatures

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DEDICATION

To my patient and loving husband—Hong,
and my son—Hilson, who is turning one on September 1.

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I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Zhongwei Shen, for his many years of thoughtful, patient guidance, support, and selfless contribution to my professional development, which have been invaluable and will forever be appreciated. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the members of my committee, Professor David Schneider and Professor Suet-Ying Elena Chiu, for their helpful comments and suggestions on all stages of this project.

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ABSTRACT

THE PLURAL FORMS OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN MODERN CHINESE

SEPTEMBER 2013

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There are four major patterns of the plural forms of personal pronouns in Modern Chinese, which are: Same Wording, Suffixation (Multisyllabic and Monosyllabic Suffixations), Sound Combination (Coda Suffix and New Wording), and Tonal Changes.

Same Wording was the original plural pattern since the singular form was also used as plural form in Old Chinese. Suffixation was already appeared in Middle Chinese. Author suspects that Suffixation was a concept inspired by non-Han languages such as the Buddhist Sanskrit. Each Chinese dialect chose a way to represent this concept based on its dialectal characteristic, thus there are many dialects in China. For example, the [men] suffix in many northern dialects are phonologically and semantically related to the Tang dynasty suffixes, while the m – initial might has been originated in Tang dynasty dialects, the – n ending might be a result of Altaic language influences.

Northern dialects have a simpler pattern due to the influence of Altaic languages, in comparison, the plural pattern of southern dialects are more complex due to the contact with Miao, Yao, Zhuang languages.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
 CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Historical background of China and its dialects	1
1.2 Plural forms of personal pronouns in Chinese	4
2. SAME WORDING.....	7
2.1 Same Wording in Modern Chinese.....	7
2.2 Same Wording evidences in Old Chinese.....	9
2.3 Same Wording Conclusion.....	11
3. SUFFIXATION.....	13
3.1 Word Suffixation	13
3.2 Plural Markers in Buddhist translations.....	15
3.3 Multisyllabic Suffixation	21
3.4 Monosyllabic Suffixation.....	24
3.4.1 Monosyllabic Suffix with m- initial	25
3.4.2 Historical development of –men suffix in Northern dialects	27
4. SOUND COMBINATION.....	47
4.1 Coda Suffixation	47

4.2 Tonal Change.....	51
5. COMPARISON WITH HANYU FANGYAN DITUJI.....	55
6. CONCLUSION.....	59
REFERENCES.....	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1	Timeline of Chinese dynasties1
2	Personal pronouns of English and Mandarin Chinese.....4
3	Old Persian personal pronouns18
4	Personal pronouns in Huanggang areas.....22
5	Dialects with two plural forms of personal pronouns26
6	The development of the plural suffix –men in the northern dialects.....45
7	Personal pronouns of Taishan dialect.....51
8	Personal pronouns of Zhuang dialect..... 54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Locations of the Same Wording pattern in Modern Chinese.....	8
2	Map of the Yellow River.....	8
3	Map of China during the Song dynasty period.....	42
4	Plural forms of personal pronouns in Modern Chinese.....	58

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical background of China and its dialects

There are many dialects spoken in China. Many Chinese dialects, although named as dialects instead of languages, are not mutually intelligent and uncommunicative with each other. For example, the most commonly known dialects—Mandarin (spoken in the north) and Cantonese (spoken in the south)—are linguistically different as English and French. In order to have a better understanding of the dialects spoken in China, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the linguistic and historical background about China. Following is a timeline of the Chinese dynasties.

Table 1. Timeline of Chinese dynasties

Dates	Dynasty
ca. 2000-1500 B.C.	Xia
1700-1027 B.C.	Shang
1027-771 B.C.	Western Zhou
770-221 B.C.	Eastern Zhou
	770-476 B.C. -- Spring and Autumn period
	475-221 B.C. -- Warring States period
221-207 B.C.	Qin
206 B.C.-A.D. 9	Western Han
A.D. 9-24	Xin (Wang Mang interregnum)
A.D. 25-220	Eastern Han
A.D. 220-280	Three Kingdoms
A.D. 265-316	Western Jin
A.D. 317-420	Eastern Jin
A.D. 420-588	Southern and Northern Dynasties
A.D. 581-617	Sui
A.D. 618-907	Tang
A.D. 907-960	Five Dynasties
A.D. 907-979	Ten Kingdoms

A.D. 960-1279	Song
A.D. 916-1125	Liao
A.D. 1038-1227	Western Xia
A.D. 1115-1234	Jin
A.D. 1279-1368	Yuan
A.D. 1368-1644	Ming
A.D. 1644-1911	Qing
A.D. 1911-1949	Republic of China (in mainland China)
A.D. 1949-	Republic of China (in Taiwan)
A.D. 1949-	People's Republic of China

Historically, many of the minorities of China were not minorities at all. They had their own kingdoms with civilizations that were different from, but no less impressive than, that of the Han Chinese. For nearly half of the past two millennia, many of the ‘minorities’ ruled not only their own independent territories, but also large parts of China and sometimes all of China.

The best known are the Mongols who, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, conquered and ruled all of China, Central Asia, and a good part of Eastern Europe. The Mongols were the rulers of the Yuan dynasty. Equally impressive in their military conquest were the Manchus. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they established the Qing Dynasty, ruling all of China, Mongolia, Tibet, and Chinese Turkestan. The Qing Dynasty survived until 1911. One of its heritages is the extensive geographical span of Modern China.

Less overwhelming than the Mongols and the Manchus, but nonetheless significant in their conquests, were the Tibetans, the various Turkic tribes from the Ruanruan, Tuque to the Uighur, the Tangut of the Xixia Kingdom, the Khitan of the Liao Kingdom, the Jurcheds of the Jin Kingdom, and the Lolo-Burmese of the Nanchao Kingdom.

Indeed, ‘barbarian’ invasion and conquest of the Han Chinese territory was an integral part of every Chinese historical period. Even the most glorious of the Han Chinese dynasties, the Tang (seventh-tenth century), was founded with the military assistance of the Tiele Turks. It suffered the disgrace of having its capital, Chang-an, sacked by the Uighurs and Tibetans mid-dynasty.”

This is the reason why there are many dialects in Chinese. “Linguistically, the minorities of China speak an enormous number of languages, ranging from Indo-European, Korean, and Altaic in the North to Tibeto-Murman, Austronesian, Mon-Khmer, Kam-Tai and Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) in the South... Chinese has not always been the prestige language, and contact-induced changes have occurred frequently in all of the languages in China.¹

As shown above, China was ruled by various groups of people in history. Language contacts with other non-Han languages were the main reason that there were and still are many dialects spoken in China. According to the recent official data, there are fifty-seven ethnic groups in China. Han is the dominate group constitute approximately ninety-three percent of the current population in China. Thus, when we talk about Chinese, we normally refer to the Han people and the dialects they speak.

Scholars usually group the Chinese dialects into seven major dialect groups: Northern dialect (Mandarin), Wu, Xiang, Gan, Hakka, Yue, and Min.² Each dialect group has its linguistic characteristics differ from each other. This is just to show how different dialects can be in China.

¹ Charles N. Li (1995), “*Language Contact in China: Is Mandarin Chinese derived from a Pidgin?*”, Linguistic Change Under Contact Conditions, ed. Jacek Fisiak.

² Yuan Jiahua (1961), *Hanyu fangyan gaiyao* ‘An outline of the Chinese dialects’.

1.2 Plural forms of personal pronouns in Chinese

Personal pronouns could be very different between dialects in Chinese. In fact, personal pronouns are the most basic words in a language, which is also most commonly used in daily conversations. The plural form is different in each language and dialect. For example, it is relatively simple in the English language: the suffix [-s] is added to all nouns to represent plural, such as ‘two students’. But this rule does not apply to the personal pronouns in the English language, as shown in the table below. In the other hand, Chinese is a quantitative language, so it does not have a specific plural suffix to indicate plurality. The Chinese language would use the pattern of ‘number + measure word + noun’ to indicate the quantity of the noun being describe. For example: *san1ge4 laos3shi* 三个老师 <three + measure word + teacher> ‘three teachers’. However, this grammatical pattern does not apply to personal pronouns in the Chinese language either.

Table 2. Personal pronouns of English and Mandarin Chinese

	First Person Singular	First Person Plural	Second Person Singular	Second Person Plural	Third Person Singular	Third Person Plural
English	I	we	you	you	he/she/it	they
Mandarin Chinese	wǒ 我	wǒmen 我们	nǐ 你	nǐmen 你们	tā 他 / 她 / 它	tāmen 他们/她们 / 它们

From the data listed above, Mandarin Chinese seems to have a simple pattern to indicate personal pronoun plural by just adding the word suffix *men* 们 to the singular form, which is called Suffixation in this paper—meaning adding a suffix to the singular form to represent plural. On the other hand, the English language use a combination of

two different patterns: Same Wording—using the same word as the singular form to represent plural, as seen in the second person singular and plural; in addition, the English language also use New Wording—using a word that is different from the singular to represent plural, as seen in first person and third person.

Although the plural forms of personal pronouns in Mandarin is very simple, but each Chinese dialect might has a different way to represent plural, this paper is to show readers what are the typological plural forms of personal pronouns in Chinese.

For the purpose of this paper, I have collected the singular and plural forms of over two hundred Chinese dialects from linguistic books and articles. According to the data collected for this paper, there are four typological plural forms of representing personal pronouns in Chinese.

- (1) Same Wording, with its “no change staying the same” features, is probably the earliest pattern, which is to say that the earliest form of personal pronouns plural should be the same as its singular form.
- (2) Suffixation, by adding a suffix to all singular forms to represent plural, is systematic and logical, so it should be the next commonly use pattern. In addition, the suffix could be represented in one or more characters (A.K.A. Monosyllabic and Multisyllabic Word Suffixations), or in a coda (A.K.A. Coda Suffixation);
- (3) Sound Combination /New Wording: a new character was used to better represent the sound after the sound combination of the singular form and a suffix. In many cases, it is a combination of the singular form and a coda suffix, so New Wording includes Coda Suffixation;

(4) Tonal Changes: dropping or raising of tones to distinguish plural from singular, sometimes it is the result of sound combination of the personal pronoun singular and suffix.

The above process could happen more than once in a dialect, which makes it more difficult to find the collect development of the plural form in such dialect. Thus, sometimes we need to look back into history to find clues. We will examine each plural form in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

SAME WORDING

2.1 Same Wording in Modern Chinese

Same Wording simply means that the plural forms of the personal pronouns are the same as the singular form in a dialect. Same Wording is perceived in some Modern Chinese dialects, such as the fourteen cities in Henan 河南 province , including Zhengzhou 郑州 , Huojia 获嘉 , Kanfengxian 开封县 , Xiping 西平, etc ; fourteen cities in Shandong 山东 province , including Qingdao 青岛 , Zibo 淄博 , Xintai 新泰, Dongming 东明, etc ; as well as in areas such as Shijiazhuang 石家庄 , Jizhou 冀州 ; Hunan 湖南 , Zhangjiajie 张家界 , Hanshou 汉寿 ; Nanjing 南京 , Ganyu 赣榆 ; Lanzhou 兰州 , Qin'an 秦安.³

After looking at the above locations in the Map of China, an interesting phenomenon was found. The dialects that use Same Wording to represent the plural form of personal pronoun in Modern Chinese are found in the Gan dialect group 赣语区 along the mouth of the Yellow River located on east central China. A map taken from Hanyu Fangyan Dituji (hereafter HFD) and the map of China are provided below to visually demonstrate the exact locations of these dialects.

³ These locations were found in the personal pronoun section of the Hanyu Fangyan Dituji (汉语方言地图集), compiled by Cao Ziyun, et al. 2008.

Figure 1. Locations of Same Wording in Modern Chinese⁴

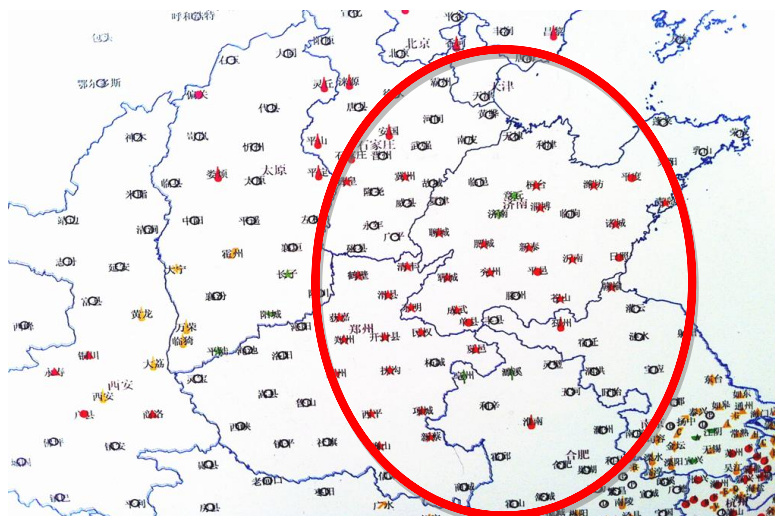
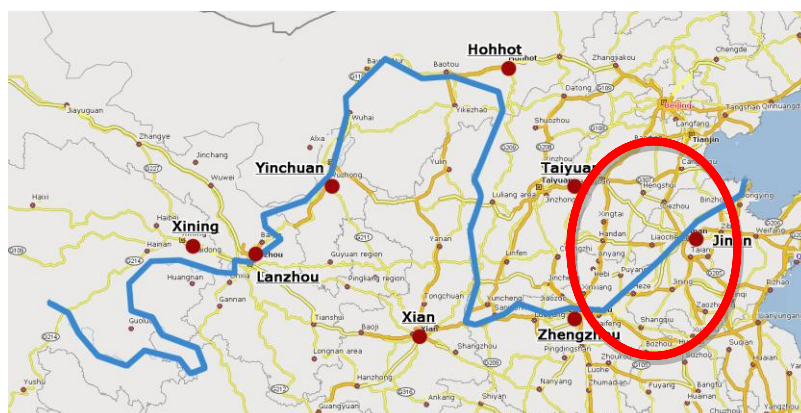


Figure 2. Map of the Yellow River⁵



The Chinese history shows that the civilization of the Chinese people starts along the Yellow River. In addition, there is written proof that the singular form of personal pronouns were also used as plural in Old Chinese (> 220 A.D. the end of Han dynasty).

⁴ The dialect points with a red star are the locations that use Same Wording pattern to represent personal pronoun plural in Modern Chinese. Map taken from Chinese Fangyan Dituji.

⁵ Map from <http://www.inaresort.com>.

2.2 Same Wording evidence in Old Chinese

Before the creation of written characters, there have been languages spoken by different groups of people. However, without written evidences, we cannot reconstruct the languages being spoken in ancient China. From the early texts where some can date back to the Shang dynasty (17-11 B.C.), we can see that the singular form of personal pronouns was used as plural in Old Chinese (> 220 A.D. the end of Han dynasty).

- (1) 三人行，必有我师焉。（论语，述而）

<Three people walking, must have my teacher function word>

“Three people are walking, someone must can be my teacher.”

- (2) 百姓闻王车马之音，见羽旄之美，举疾首蹙额而相告曰：吾王之好田猎，夫何使我至于此极也？（孟子，梁惠王下）⁶

<Commoners hear king car horse noise, see feather and yak's tail beauty, raise head up knit forehead and each other tell: our king's love field hunting, man why make us reach such extreme?.>

“The commoners heard the noise of the king's horse and carriage, and saw the beauty of the feather and yak's tail flag, were all raise their head and wrinkle their forehead telling each others: our king's love is field hunting, how could he make us to reach such extreme?”

- (3) 甚矣，汝之不惠！（列子，汤问）

<Excess already, your not kind!>

“Enough already, you are not kind!”

- (4) 聚室而谋曰：“吾与汝毕力平险，指通豫南，达于汉阴，可乎？”（列子，汤问）

<Gather room then plan say: ‘I and you fully strength concur danger, point through Yunan, reach at Hanyin, alright?’>

“(They) gather in a room and plan: ‘I and you use full strength to concur danger, direct through Yunan, meet at Hanyin, is it alright?’”

- (5) 彼所将中国人不过十五六万。（资治通鉴，汉纪）

<He receive incite Chinese people no more than ten five six ten-thousands.>

“The Chinese people who he defeated are no more than one hundred fifty or sixty thousands.”

⁶ Example 2 was taken from Ota (2003), p101. The English translation is mine.

- (6) 四人从太子，……上怪之，问曰：“彼何为者？”（史记，留侯世家）⁷
 <Four people follow heir, …… above wonder, ask: ‘they why for who?’>
 “Four people follow the heir, …… the emperor wonders, asks: ‘Who are they working for?’”

As shown in the examples listed above, the first personal pronoun *wǒ* 我 in the first example represent singular ‘I’, and the *wǒ* 我 in the second example represent plural ‘we’. The second person pronoun *rǔ* 汝 in the third example represent the singular form ‘you’, and the same character in the fourth sentence represent the plural form ‘you’. The third person pronoun *bǐ* 彼 in the fifth sentence represent the singular form ‘he’, and the same character in the sixth example represent plural ‘they’.

Sometimes in Old Chinese, there were characters such as **zriil* 侪, **zuu* 曹, **djog* 属, **puuuls* 辈, and **tuuulʔ* 等⁸ added after the nouns and pronouns to represent plural. However, many scholars believe that the actually functions of these patterns mean *wǒmen* zhèxiē rén ‘we people’, and *nǐmen* zhèxiē rén ‘you people’ as shown in the examples below, so they have not been grammaticalized as suffixes in Old Chinese, and therefore, they are different from the Modern Chinese suffix *men* 们.

- (7) 吾侪偷食，朝不谋夕，何其长也。（左传. 襄公十八年）
 <I chai steal food, morning not planning evening, what is growing.>
 “We people steal food, in the morning we don’t have plan for the evening, what’s beneficial?”

⁷ Examples, except 2, were quoted from “Gudai Chinese”, edited by Cheng Xilan, Wu Fuxi (1984), page 211-212. The English translation is mine.

⁸ The IPA pronunciations are Pan Wuyun’s reconstruction found on www.eastling.org.

- (8) 顾我万年之后，汝曹皆当出嫁。（曹操. 让县自明本志令）
 <Care I ten-thousand years after, you cao all should get marry.>
 “After I passed away, you all should remarry.”
- (9) 不者，若属皆且为所虏。（史记. 项羽本纪）
 <No people, you shu all for being captured.>
 “If not, you people are all going to be captured by him.”
- (10) 公等皆去，吾亦从此逝矣。（史记. 高祖本纪）⁹
 <sir deng all left, I also from here/now leave.>
 “You are all free to go, I am going to leave as well.”¹⁰

The examples listed above once again proven that Same Wording is the earliest pattern in the development of the personal pronoun plural patterns in Chinese.

2.3 Same Wording conclusion

The fact that there are still a significant number of dialects still perceived the earliest plural form of personal pronouns in modern Chinese is a phenomenon that worth studying. It shows the deep fundamental aspect of the Chinese language. Considering the location of these dialects along the Yellow River plane, which is usually the center of attention over the course of Chinese history, having such a strong language foundation that they were not influenced by other outside dialects and languages is worth another look.

It is unclear why only dialects in the locations around the mouth of the Yellow River use the Same Wording form to represent plurality in personal pronouns. It is also unclear why do these dialects appear in such density. Further studies should be done to explain this phenomenon. But for the purpose of this paper, the discussion on the Same

⁹ Examples quoted from Cheng Xilan & Wu Fuxi (1984), page 212. The English translation is mine.

¹⁰ English translation from chinesenotes.com.

Wording form is going to stop here. In the next chapter, we will take a look at the form of Suffixation, which is the most commonly use form of indicating plurality of personal pronouns in modern Chinese.

CHAPTER 3

SUFFIXATION

3.1 Word Suffixations

Based on the data collected from books and articles for the purpose of this paper, the majority of the Chinese dialects add suffix to represent personal pronoun plural, which is called Suffixation in this paper. Within the categories of Suffixation, there is Same Suffixation and Different Suffixation when looking at the patterns across all three personal pronouns. Same Suffixation means the same suffix was added to the singular forms of the first, second, and third person pronouns to represent plurality. Different Suffixation means that not all three personal pronoun plural used the same suffix, which might result in first person and second person plural using suffix A, but third person plural using suffix B or other pattern to represent plural, or vice versa. It is predicted that Different Suffixation should be rare cases, because it is not linguistically logical to have two suffixes to just represent the three personal pronoun plurals.

Within the big category of Suffixation, there are two subgroups, which are Word Suffixation and Coda Suffixation. So-called Word Suffixation means that a suffix can be represent in one or more characters. Because each Chinese character is one morpheme, which is one word, so I named them Word Suffixation. The characters used as word suffixes could be content words or function words, and these word suffixes can be in one or more characters. If the word suffix is written one character, then it is also called Monosyllabic Suffixation; if it is written in more than one character, then it is called Multisyllabic Suffixation.

Modern Chinese dialects that use Monosyllabic Suffixation to represent plurality of personal pronouns are such as *men* 们 in Mandarin, *li* 哩 in Boxiang 柏祥 dialect of Yueyang 岳阳 city, *tei* 哋 in Cantonese, etc. Dialects that use Multisyllabic Suffixation to represent personal pronoun plural are such as *tɕə xuə* 这伙 in Ji'nan 济南 dialect, *tɕiə ɕiɻr* 这些儿 in Mouping 牟平 dialect, *xua neij* 伙人 in Jian'ou 建瓯, etc.¹¹ Again, this paper is going to refer to these kinds of patterns as Word Suffixation. In addition, Monosyllabic Suffixation and Multisyllabic Suffixation are the two sub-categories of Word Suffixation.

As mentioned above, another subgroup of Suffixation is called Coda Suffixation, which means the suffix could also be written as a coda in International Phonetic Alphabets (IPA). Dialects that use Coda Suffixation are such as: *-n* in Xiamen 厦门 dialect, *-k* in Yangjiang 阳江 dialect, *-ok* in Duruan 杜阮 dialect of Jiangmen 江门 city, etc. This kind of situation is also referred as Sound Combination in many scholars' works, as well as in the HFD. Because coda suffix is always attached to the singular forms of the personal pronouns to make them plural, which is a result of Sound Combination, thus Sound Combination is a better term to describe Coda Suffixation, so I am going to discuss about Coda Suffixation in the chapter of Sound Combination. It is important to note that Coda Suffixation is just one category of Sound Combination.

¹¹ Data cited from Wang Huayun, 2008.

According to my research and data collected, Word Suffixation is the next logical pattern after Same Wording, and that Sound Combination patterns are derived from Word Suffixation under the linguistic tendency of simplification in communication. Evidences are provided below to support this claim.

3.2 Plural markers in Buddhist translations

According to Feng Chuntian (1995) and Cheng Xilan & Wu Fuxi (1984), the main difference between Old Chinese and Modern Chinese is that, the singular form was also used as plural forms in Old Chinese, which is also proven in the examples listed in the session of Same Wording. However, we see the existence of plural markers such as **zriil* 侪, **zuu* 曹, **djog* 属, **puuuls* 辈, and **tuuu?* 等 added after the nouns and pronouns to represent plural. If the concept of distinguishing plural with singular was not originated in Old Chinese, perhaps we might able to find the answers in the Eastern Han dynasty translations of the Buddhist Sutras.

The first documented translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese occurs in 148 CE with the arrival of the Parthian prince-turned-monk An Shigao 安世高. He worked to establish Buddhist temples in Luoyang and organized the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, testifying to the beginning of a wave of Central Asian Buddhist proselytism that was to last several centuries. An Shigao translated Buddhist texts on basic doctrines, meditation, and abhidharma. An Xuan 安玄, a Parthian layman who worked alongside An Shigao, also translated an early Mahāyāna Buddhist text on the

bodhisattva path.¹²

Other than An Shigao and An Xuan, another famous translator was the Kushan monk Lokakṣema (支婁迦讖, active c. 164–186 CE), who came from the ancient Buddhist kingdom of Gandhāra. Lokakṣema translated important Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, as well as rare, early Mahāyāna sūtras on topics such as samādhi, and meditation on the buddha Akṣobhya. These translations from Lokakṣema continue to give insight into the early period of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This corpus of texts often includes emphasizes ascetic practices and forest dwelling, and absorption in states of meditative concentration.¹³

In the Eastern Han dynasty's Buddhist Sanskrit translations, it shows a great number of decreases in personal pronouns singular forms being used. The three major personal pronoun singular forms are: first person *wǒ* 我, second person *rǔ* 汝, and third person *qí* 其 and *zhī* 之. The earlier form of personal pronouns with plural markers were written as *wǒ děng* 我等, *wǒ bèi* 我輩, *wǒ cáo* 我曹, *rǔ děng* 汝等, *rǔ bèi* 汝輩, *rǔ cáo* 汝曹, etc.¹⁴ Even double markers such as *wǒ cáo děng bèi* 我曹等輩 were largely

¹² Williams, Paul. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. 2008. p. 30

¹³ Same as above.

¹⁴ Yu Xiaorong, et al. (遇笑容, 2009: p44): "These suffixes are very common in the early translations of the Buddhist Sutras. Niu Dao (1971: p51-52) gave a very extensive analysis on these suffixes, as well as seem in Zhou Fagao (周法高, 1959: p336-340) and Zhan Xiuhui (詹秀惠, 1973: p275-283). Basically claiming that the original meanings of these suffixes are "all in this group, or this category..." Thus, "我曹輩" is as saying "我们这一类的人"<we people in this group>. But in most situations, they were only added after personal pronouns, and only functioned as plural markers. These suffixes seem to be more commonly used in the Western Han dynasty. Examples before the Han dynasty were rare. (Recited from Wang Li 王力(1936): p70)"

appeared in the translation of the Eastern Han dynasty's Buddhist Sanskrit. Similar to the situations of the personal pronouns, plural markers were also added after directional pronouns as shown in examples below.

- (1) 我亦如是辈。 (T. 13.235.3)
“I also as this bei.”
<I am also as these people.>
- (2) 见是辈人如见佛无有异。 (T. 626.405.1)
“See this bei person as see Buddha no have difference.”
<Seeing these people is as seeing Buddha, (there is) no difference.>
- (3) 是辈人为己自亡失。 (T.224.441.1)
“This bei person for self certainly lose lose.”
<These people who only care about themselves will certainly lose themselves.>
- (4) 勿复作是曹事。 (T.184.471.1)
“Don't repeat do this cao thing.”
<Don't do these things again.>
- (5) 是曹人者不当见之。 (T.224.441.2)
“This cao person no should meet him.”
<This kind of person you should not meet him.>

From the Chinese translation of these Buddhist Sanskrit listed above, we can see that the origin of the personal pronoun plural markers might be the result of language contact with non-Han languages, possibly (1) Old Persian, since the very first translation of Buddhist texts were done by the Persian prince An Shigao; or (2) Old Kushan language spoken in Gandhāra India, since the second important translation of Buddhist text was done by the Kushan monk Lokakṣema. In order to find out whether or not these ancient languages had any influences on the development of the plural forms of personal pronouns in Old Chinese, I also tried to find out how were personal pronouns looked like in these ancient languages, and the following are my results.

According to Michael de Vaan & Alexander Luborsky (2011), “Old Persian is an Old Iranian language belonging to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. Speakers of Proto-Iranian may have migrated southwest around 100 BCE from Central Asia.”¹⁵ On the other hand, according to Yu Taishan (2011), “it is very possible that the original language of the Kushans... is Tokharian, as stated by historical linguists”.¹⁶ “Tokharian, or Tocharian is an extinct branch of the Indo-European language family. Today we know mainly two branches of Tocharian: Tocharian A (Turfanian, Arsi, or East Tocharian) and Tocharian B (Kuchean or West Tocharian). These languages are extinct roughly from the 3rd to 9th centuries AD; before they became extinct, their speakers were either absorbed or exterminated by the expanding Uyghur tribes. Both languages were once spoken in the Tarim Basin in Central Asia, now a part of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China.”¹⁷ Since these ancient languages were already extinct, although we can still reconstruct the personal pronoun patterns of these languages from the written texts as shown below, but no direct evidence of language borrowing from these languages to ancient Chinese was found.

Table 3. Old Persian personal pronouns

	1sg.	1pl.	2sg.	3sg.	3pl.
nom.	<i>adam</i>	<i>vayam</i>	<i>tu vām</i>		
acc.	<i>mām, -mā</i>		<i>θuvām</i>	<i>-šim, -dim</i>	<i>-šiš, -diš</i>
gen.-dat.	<i>manā, -mai y</i>	<i>amāxam</i>	<i>-tai y</i>	<i>-šai y</i>	<i>-šām</i>
abl.	<i>-ma</i>			<i>-šim?</i>	

¹⁵ Michael de Vaan & Alexander Lubotsky (2011). P1.

¹⁶ Yu, Taishan (余太山), 2011. P16.

¹⁷ Wikipedia, searched keyword ‘Old Kushan language’ on July 18, 2013.

In addition, Sanskrit pronouns are declined for case, number, and gender. The pronominal declension applies to a few adjectives as well. Many pronouns have alternative enclitic forms. The first and second person pronouns are declined for the most part alike, having by analogy assimilated themselves with one another. Where two forms are given, the second is enclitic and an alternative form. Ablatives in singular and plural may be extended by the syllable *-tas*; thus *mat* or *mattas*, *asmat* or *asmattas*. Sanskrit does not have true third person pronouns, but its demonstratives fulfill this function instead by standing independently without a modified substantive.¹⁸

As Donald Winford (2003) stated, “Cases of maintenance may involve varying degrees of influence on the lexicon and structure of a group’s native language from the external language with which it is in contact. This kind of influence is referred to as ‘borrowing’.”¹⁹ Borrowing is the earlier stage of influence due to language contact. So without evidence there is no way to know which language was the source of this language borrowing.

But needless to say, due to the necessity of translating the sutras’ original meanings, the concept of adding plural markers was borrowed and was used in the same fashion as they were used in the source language. In this case, the plural markers were added to mostly personal pronouns, some directional pronouns and adjectives in Old Chinese.²⁰ This is to say that the plural markers appeared in Buddhist Sutras translations

¹⁸ Wikipedia, searched keyword ‘Sanskrit’ on July 20, 2013.

¹⁹ Winford, Donald (2003). An Introduction to Contact Linguistics. P12.

²⁰ Claim was supported by Xu Lihe 许理和 (2009), Yu Xiaorong 遇笑容, Cao Guangshun 曹广顺 (2009).

were only introduced, but not yet systematic or grammaticalized as plural suffixes in Old Chinese.

Hypothetically, during the development of these plural markers, the plural usage on directional pronouns and adjectives did not developed further or die out in the major dialects. Probably because the frequent usage of personal pronouns in daily conversations, so the only plural marker left was the ones used after personal pronouns. As we all know, the popularity of these sutras' Chinese version brought a huge influence to the Chinese language and cultures, so that the Chinese people adopted the usage of these markers in their colloquial languages, which developed into plural suffixes by the Tang dynasty.²¹

Although scholars do not agree that the plural markers appeared in the Old Chinese functioned as plural suffixes after personal pronouns, one thing to be sure is that the pattern of Suffixation was not originated in Chinese, because the evidences from Old Chinese shown us that the original plural form of Chinese personal pronouns was Same Wording. But it is inevitable that these plural markers existed in Old Chinese, and could have evolved in Chinese dialects over the years. In addition, a linguistics function does not appear suddenly out of no-where, there must be a stage of language evolution before a grammatical function stabilized in a language. Based on the evidence, I believe that the language function of 'adding plural markers/suffix' in Chinese was borrowed from a non-Han language.

²¹ We can still perceive the usage of 等 in some modern Hakka dialects, but we are not sure they are related linguistically. Based on the same character and meanings, I believe the plural suffix 等/等人 in modern Hakka dialects are derived from the Old Chinese plural marker 等.

Since the Buddhist sutras were written influence instead of spoken influence, the translations are done based on semantic instead of phonology, thus translators must have chosen the characters that have similar meanings in Old Chinese to represent the plural function. Therefore, it is reasonable that the word choice of Old Chinese such as **zriil* 侪, **zuu* 曹, **djog* 属, **puuuls* 辈, and **tuuu?* 等 were chosen because the original lexical meanings of these characters were ‘a group of people’.

3.3 Multisyllabic Suffixation

Multisyllabic Suffixation means that the suffix can be written in more than one word or character. According to Wang Huayun (汪化云, 2004/ 2008), it is reasonable to believe that Multisyllabic Suffixation is the earlier form of Word Suffixation. Because Multisyllabic suffixes usually have the meaning of ‘a group of people’, which is similar to the meaning of the plural markers found in Eastern Han dynasty Buddhist sutra translations.

There are still many modern Chinese dialects use plural suffixes with the meaning of ‘a group of people’ after personal pronouns. Therefore, I believe that these plural markers found in Old Chinese could be the earlier forms of the multisyllabic suffixes in those Modern Chinese dialects. For example, there are many south eastern dialects that added a multisyllabic suffix with the meaning of ‘a group of people’, such as: *tʂə xuə* 这伙 in Ji’nan 济南 dialect, *tɕiə ɕiɿr* 这些儿 in Mouping 牟平 dialect, *xua neŋ* 伙人 in Jian’ou 建瓯, *ʒa1huo3er* 轧伙儿 in the Changdao 长岛 city of Shandong 山东 province,

ji3 ge4 几个 in Fuyang 阜阳 city of Anhui 安徽 province, and more. There are also many south eastern dialects that use multisyllabic suffixes with *ren2* 人 ‘person’ to represent plurality of personal pronouns, which could be developed from the meaning of these Old Chinese plural markers.

When using multisyllabic suffix to indicate plural, “due to the economic standard of a language and the requirement of rhyming”²², it is most likely that part of the original suffix is omitted to become simpler, as shown in the Huanggang 黄冈 city of eastern Hubei 湖北 province and its surrounding towns. According to Wang Huayun (2004/2008), there are several ways of indicating the plural forms of personal pronouns in these areas as shown in the table below.

Table 4. Personal pronouns in Huanggang areas

	First Person Plural	Second Person Plural	Third Person Plural
South East of Huanggang: Wuxue city and its surrounding areas (武穴市及周边)	(1) ɛŋan (ta [˥]) ˥tɕi ko [˥] 俺 (这) 几个 (2) ɛŋan (ta [˥]) ɛse ɛin 俺 (这) 些人	(1) ˥ŋ (le [˥]) ˥tɕi ko [˥] 你 (那) 几个 (2) ˥ŋ (le [˥]) ɛse ɛin 你 (那) 些人	(1) ɛxe (le [˥]) ˥tɕi ko [˥] 渠 (那) 几个 (2) ɛxe (le [˥]) ɛse ɛin 渠 (那) 些人
North East of Huanggang: Huangmei city (黄梅县)	˥ŋo ta [˥] ·ti 我 这 的	˥ŋ ta [˥] ·ti 你 这 的	ɛk ^h æ ta [˥] ·ti 渠 这 的
North West of Huanggang: Yingshan, Qichun (英山, 蕲春)	˥ŋo ·tɛ 我 这	˥ŋ ·tɛ 你 这	ɛk ^h ɛ ·tɛ 渠 这

²² Wang Huayun, 2008. p258.

Due to the close connection in location of the places above, these dialects are all belong to the Jianghuai Mandarin dialect group Huangxiao sub-dialect 江淮官话黄孝片. In addition, because these plural suffixes of personal pronouns have phonological connections, so they must also came from the same origin. The plural form of Wuxue dialects (*ta˥˩*) *tɕi ko˥˩* (这) 几个 or (*ta˥˩*) *se in* (这) 些人 should have been the original suffix, and it can be partially abbreviated into *tɕi ko˥˩* 几个 or *se in* 些人 without changing its meanings. The pattern of Huangmei dialects *ta˥˩ ·ti* 这的 could have been the result of *ko˥˩* 个 being omitted, and *tɕi* 几 was assimilated by the initial of *ta˥˩* 这 thus spoken as *·ti* 的 (*tɕ->t*). The pattern of Yingshan and Qichun areas *·tɕ* 这 might have been the result of losing *·ti* 的 due to its attenuation.²³

This logical reasoning shows the development of the multisyllabic suffixes with directional words was to omit certain parts of its original form. The remaining parts of the suffix might have gone through a long process of phonological changes, and thus multisyllabic suffixations can be written in slightly different ways. By comparing with the local dialects, we might able to see a pattern of simplification.

Due to the tendency of simplification for the convenience of communication, it is most likely that the multisyllabic suffix would become simpler (as proven in the Huanggang dialects described above), and would become monosyllabic. So in the next chapter, we will look at monosyllabic suffixation.

²³ Wang Huayun (2008), p257-258.

3.4 Monosyllabic Suffixation

Monosyllabic Suffixation means that the suffix can be written in only one word or character. As show in the last session, Monosyllabic Suffixation might be the result of abbreviation from multisyllabic suffixes. We can group the monosyllabic suffixes into two major categories: (1) suffix that is a content word; and (2) suffix that is a function word.

Some suffixes that are content words could have the meaning of people and/or a group of people, and usually contain the character of *ren2* 人 or *nong2* 侬 (as in Min dialects), meaning ‘people’. Such as *nen2* in Fuding 福鼎 dialect, *lən* 侬 in Yiyang 宜阳 dialect, *tɕiŋ* 众 in Jiangxi 江西 Hakka dialect, *læy22* 类 in Lianzhou 连州 dialect, etc.

Some suffixes might associate with locations, such as *jia1* 家 ‘family’, and *li3* 里 ‘a village’, etc.

In addition, there are also some suffixes that were originally the possessive form of the dialects, which might grammatically diminish into function words or codas. More discussions about this group will provide in the chapter of Sound Combination.

Among the suffixes that are function words, some begin with *m* initial, and some begin with non-*m* initial. The reason I group them this way, was because the *m* initial suffixes dominate the majority of this group, especially the suffix *men*. In addition, many scholars have studied the origin of *men*, but were not agree upon the results. I would like to incorporate their studies, and provide some thoughts about the development of *men* below.

3.4.1 Monosyllabic Suffix with *m*- initial

Among the dialects that use monosyllabic suffixation to represent plurality of personal pronouns, there is a majority of dialects in Northern, Jin, Xiang, and Gan dialect groups that use a suffix that begins with nasal initial *m*, such as *men* in the Beijing 北京, *mẽ* Ji`nan 济南, *meʔ* in Taiyuan 太原, *mi* in Wanzhen 万镇 and Hejiachuan 贺家川, *meʔ4* in Shenmu 神木 and Gaojiabao 高家堡, *m* in Bailongjiang 白龙江流域, etc.

Because of the comparatively sufficient written evidence of the Northern dialects due to the controlling power of China were usually in the North, we were able to see many written examples and scholarly researches regarding the *men* suffix. The suffix *men* is a function word, so in order to see a broader picture of the development of this plural suffix, we will need to find the possible origin of *men*.

There are two major arguments regarding the origin of the plural suffix *men*. Some scholars believe *men* was originated from a Chinese dialect group in the Tang dynasty; another scholars argue that *men* was developed under the influence of the Altaic languages in the Song/Liao dynasty. After reviewing the evidences from both sides, I believe that the concept of adding plural suffix was originally an influence by the non-Chinese languages as shown in the chapter of Same Wording. The suffix added originally was adopted and developed further in Chinese dialects over the years of on-and-off power switching by Chinese and non-Chinese people. There are in many degrees of language contact, which could result in language borrowing, language shift, or language creation. Different degree of language contact in different areas of China resulted in the

current non-systematic situation of many ways to represent the plural forms of personal pronouns.

According to the data, there are evidences that all seven main dialect groups have sub-dialects that use Suffixation to indicate personal pronoun plurality. In addition to which, the suffix *men* constitute the majority. It is reasonable to believe that for the convenience of communication since the unification of the People’s Republic of China, the influence of the required education of *Putonghua* (standard Mandarin spoken in Beijing) has largely effected the development of *men* in every dialect group. Thus, there are evidences that there are duo-pronunciations for the plural forms of personal pronouns in some dialects: one literal pronunciation most likely to pronounce as *men* or in similar pronunciation and one vernacular pronunciation most likely to be the original plural form. For examples:

Table 5. Dialects with two plural forms for personal pronouns²⁴

	First person plural	Second person plural	Third person plural
Nanchang (南昌)	(L) 我们 (C) 我个里	(L) 你们 (C) 你个里	(L) 佢们 (C) 佢个里
Ji’nan (济南)	(L) 我们 (C) 俺这伙	(L) 你们 (C) 你这伙	(L) 他们 (C) 他这伙
Xi’an (西安)	(L) 我们 (C) 我的	(L) 你们 (C) 你的	(L) 他们 (C) 他的

Many scholars have studied the origin of -men which is written as 们 in many modern Chinese dialects. Following is a brief discussion of each scholar’s point of view and evidence.

²⁴ “L” stands for “Literal pronunciation”, and “C” stands for “Colloquial pronunciation”.

3.4.2 Historical development of *-men* suffix in Northern dialects

According to Feng Chuntian (1995), we know that since the Warren Period, the characters *chai* 侪, *cao* 曹, *shu* 属, *deng* 等, and *bei* 辈 were used as personal pronoun plural markers in Old Chinese; however, these characters still have their original meanings and can be used on their own, so they are not suffixes yet.²⁵ Among them, *chai*, *cao* and *shu* were more restricted in their grammatical functions, thus they extinct by Middle Chinese. The two commonly used plural markers in Old Chinese are *deng* and *bei*. The grammatical function of *deng* is broad, and can be used after all pronouns and nouns that indicating human or things; while *bei* is restricted to be used only after only personal pronouns and nouns indicating human, which make *bei* a more logical origin of the modern Chinese suffix *-men*.

Lü Shuxiang (1940/1955/1985) claimed that the Middle Chinese characters *bei* 辈, *mi* 弭 and *wei* 伟 of the Tang dynasty literatures were used as suffix *-men* of Modern Chinese, and they might linguistically related. For example:

- (1) 我弭当家没处得卢皮遐来。(因话录卷4—谐戏附：唐语林卷6引作“弥”)
<I mi master>
“Our master”

- (2) 今抛向南衙，被公措大伟屹邓邓把将官职去。(嘉话录 - 广记卷260引)²⁶

²⁵ Quoted from Feng Chuntian (1995, p229/856), original text is “上古汉语人称代词的单复数没有明确界限。有些人称代词是专用于单数的，如‘朕’，‘予(余)’，‘台’，‘邛’，但‘我’，‘吾’，‘汝’，‘尔’都可以用于单数和复数。... 战国以后，人称代后用‘侪’，‘等’，‘曹’，‘属’等表示复数，它们并不是表示复数的词尾。”

²⁶ Examples originally appeared in Lü Shuxiang (1985), and were later cited in Zu Shengli (1005/04).

<Now throw toward south government, by the so-called educated wei got government position gone.>

“Now plan to go over to the southern government, because the so-called educates made him lost his government position.”

Thus, Lü suggested that –men is probably related to the Tang dynasty personal pronounce suffix *puoi 𠬪, which are evidenced with similar grammatical usage of being added after human nouns or pronouns, and that both characters have initials that are similar in place of articulations. In addition, the characters in Middle Chinese initial groups, *wen2* 文 and *wei2* 微, are interchangeable in pronunciation of some Modern Chinese dialects, meaning the –en and –ei finals were interchangeable. Thus, the origin of –men can trace back to *puoi.

Lü Shuxiang (1955) further briefly cited that the order to this development shown in the Song dynasty literatures is possibly *men4* 懣, *man3* 满, *man2* 瞞 (or with 心 in the bottom), *men2* 們 (们), lastly the radical *ren* 人 ‘human/person’ was added to be written as *men* 们. In the phonological point of view, all these characters start with bilabial nasal initial m– and end with nasal ending –n, the main vowel is very similar in the place of articulations, thus it is reasonable to believe that they come from the same origin.

Zhang Huiying 张慧英 (2001) also thinks that the personal pronoun suffixes *men4* 懣, *man3* 满, *man2* 瞞 are the different forms of *men2* 們 in different dialects.

This claim was also supported by Zu Shengli 祖生利 (2005/04), who cited a few

examples that proved the same usage of these Song dynasty suffixes that have the same grammatical usage as Modern Chinese – *men*, which was used as plural suffix after personal pronouns and nouns which indicate human.

- (3) 相公懣只可道朝廷不知也。(三朝北盟汇编卷 33)

< *sir men* can only say the government no know. >

“*sirs* can only say that the government doesn’t know.”

- (4) 笑他满恁撩乱，抖下俏和，娇掩翠凌红。(克斋词：祠仙歌)

< laugh him *men* >

“laugh at *them*...”

- (5) 不因你瞒番人在此，如何我瞒四千里路来？(齐东野语卷 5)

< No because you *men* barbarians at here, why I *men* four thousand miles road come? >

“If not because you (*plural*) barbarians are here, why would *we* come from four thousand miles away?”

These Song dynasty suffixes are all ended with – *n* coda in modern Chinese pronunciation. The earlier written characters were 懣 or 满. The original pronunciation of the character 懣 was “*men4* 闷, *muo4 kun1 qie1* 莫困切, *qu* tone 去声; sometimes it was abbreviated as *man3* 满. According to *Jiyun* 《集韵》 volume seven, the characters *men4* 懣 and *man3* 满 both have the meaning of ‘annoying’ in *Shuowen Jiezi* 《说文解字》. Sometimes it is omit-able.”²⁷

²⁷ Original text cited in Zu Shengli (2005/04): “懣满，说文：烦也。或省。”

According to the Song dynasty scholar—Lou Yue 楼钥, *men4* 懣 was originally pronounced as *men4* 闷, common saying as *men2* 闷, same as saying *bei4* 辈.²⁸ This is obvious that *men4* 懣 was pronounced as *men2* 闷 during the Song dynasty; and that *man2* 瞒 is the paronym of *men2* 闷, and were used alternatively. It functions as the Tang dynasty plural marker *bei4*.

Gao Guofan 高国藩 (1988) and Huang Zheng 黄征 (1992) also found more examples in Dunhuang invocations 敦煌愿文 in the form of *er yang wei* 儿郎伟²⁹, for examples:

- (6) 儿郎伟，今夜旧岁未尽，明招（朝）便是新年。(P. 3270)
- (7) 儿郎伟，今因良时吉日，上梁雅合周旋。(P.3302)
- (8) 儿郎伟，有酒如江，有肉如山。(论障车词法第八；P. 3909)
- (9) 儿郎伟，重重视愿，一一夸张。(司空表圣文集10.58障车文；‘儿郎伟’三字全文凡四见)³⁰

Even till the Song and Ming dynasties, people still begins the *Shangliang Wen* 上梁文 with 儿郎伟. Song dynasty scholar Lou Yue explained that 儿郎伟 is the same as saying 儿郎懣, which is a Guanzhong dialect.³¹

²⁸ Original text cited in Zhang Huiying (2001): 《攻愧集》卷 72 《跋姜氏上梁文稿》：“在敕局时，见元丰中获盗推赏，刑部例皆节元案，不改俗语。有陈棘云：‘我部领你懣厮逐去深州边。’吉云：‘我随你懣去。’懣，本音闷，俗音门，犹言辈也。”

²⁹ The meaning of “儿郎” is “young man”, and “伟” was believed to be a plural marker.

³⁰ Examples 3-5 recited from Zu Shengli (1985), example 6 originally cited in Lü Shuxiang (1985).

Guanzhong, is a historical region of China corresponding to the lower valley of the Wei River. It is called Guanzhong or 'within the passes' to distinguish it from 'Guandong' or 'east of the pass', that is, the North China Plain. The North China Plain is bordered on the west by mountains. The Yellow River cuts through the mountains at the Hangu Pass separating Guanzhong from Guandong. During the Warring States Period Guanzhong was the western edge of Chinese civilization and was controlled by the state of Qin. As Qin became more militaristic its enemies claimed that it had adopted barbarian customs and was not fully Chinese. It was said that 'Guanzhong produces generals and Guandong produces ministers'. The state of Qin united China and Guanzhong was the center of the Qin and several later dynasties.³²

If Luo Yue's claim about the Guanzhong dialect uses *wei* 伟 as personal pronoun plural suffix was indeed accurate of the situation back then, then we can suggest that *wei* as a plural marker of the Guanzhong dialects might probably from non-Chinese dialects since Guanzhong "had adopted barbarian customs and was not fully Chinese". In addition, there must be a wide variety of dialects spoken in the Southern Song dynasty when Lou Yue lived, and these dialects were not mutually intelligent, so that Lou Yue did not understand the meaning of *wei*. The dialects spoken in the land of China have evolved in their own way over the years. So it is not clear when and where was each suffix developed in each dialect.

³¹ Original text was found in: 《攻愧集》卷 72 《跋姜氏上梁文稿》：

“独秦州李德一案云，‘自家伟不如今夜去’云。余哑然笑曰：“得之矣，所谓‘儿郎伟’者，犹言‘儿郎懣’，盖呼而告之，此关中方言也。”

³² From Wikipedia, keyword “Guanzhong”. Searched on June 29, 2013.

Although the character *men* 们 first appeared in the Yuan dynasty literatures, but the majority of plural markers of personal pronouns in Yuan dynasty was written as *mei* 每, and only a small amount written in *men* 们 or *men* 们. For examples:

- (10) 教普天下颠不刺的浪儿每许。(董西厢 7)
<Teach the whole world crazy not thorn man mei.>
“Teach all the promiscuous men.”
- (11) 枉惹的街坊每耻笑，着亲邻每议。(元 33.1.7)
<Not to cause the neighbor mei laugh at, make the close relative mei discuss.>
“Don’t cause the neighbors to make fun of (us), or to make the close relatives talk behind (us).”
- (12) 不信那看官每不耳喧，邻家每不恼聒。(太平 9.9)
<Not believe that audience mei not ear noise, neighbor mei not complain noise.>
“(I) don’t believe those audiences don’t think it’s noisy, the neighbors don’t complain about the noise.”
- (13) 库藏中钞本多，贴库每弊怎除。(白雪，后 3.78)
<Storage store middle copies many, paste storage mei bad how eliminate.>
“There are many copies in the storage, how to eliminate the bad copies?”
- (14) 成吉思皇帝圣旨，道与诸处官员每。(元碑 15)
<Chengjisi emperor imperial edict, say with all place official mei.>
“The Chengjisi emperor’s imperial edict, said to officials of all place.”
- (15) 军人每底盘缠军人每的家里要了者。(元典章校补 34.55)³³
<Military people mei base traveling expense military people mei family asked.>
“Ask the military people’s family for the military people’s traveling expenses.”

Although evidences found in the Southern Song dynasty literature *Zhangxie Zhuangyuan* 《张协状元》 and the Jin dynasty literature *Dongxixiang* 《董西厢》 were mostly written with *mei* 每 rather than *men* 们, both Tatsuo Ota (1953) and Lü Shuxiang (1985) believed these were edited by people later on. Because the plural forms of

³³ All examples in this session are quoted from Lü Shuxiang (1985).

personal pronouns found in another literature that was written in the same period of time named *Liuzhiyuan Zhugongdiao* 《刘知远诸宫调》 were only written with *man* 懋. This is to say that both Ota and Lü believed *men* or *man* was the plural suffix spoken by the dominate group in northern China, *mei* was not.

Cui Shizhen 崔世珍 explains in *The Dictionary of Individual Character* 《单字解》 that the original pronunciation of 每 was Shang tone 上声 when indicating frequency, such as *mei3nian2* 每年 ‘every year’, *mei3yi2ge4* 每一个 ‘every one’. It is also pronounce in Ping tone 平声 when used as plural markers *deng3* 等 or *bei4* 辈, for examples: *wo3mei3* 我每 ‘I mei’, *za2mei3* 咱每 ‘we mei’, *an2mei3* 俺每 ‘we mei’, *nen4mei3* 恁每 ‘they mei’, *ni2mei3* 你每 ‘you mei’... current scholars like to use 们.³⁴ But it is also common to see *men* 们 and *mei* 每 used interchangeably in some literatures, and sometimes used *mei* in majority. Roughly after late Ming dynasty, the majority of literatures were written with *men*. Here, we can predict that the character 每 was pronounced similar, if not exactly the same, as *men* in the Ming dynasty.

Jerry Norman (1988) suggested that *men* 们 is the combined sound of *mei3ren2* 每人 ‘every person’, because *mei3* 每 was the plural suffix of personal pronoun in the Yuan dynasty’s colloquial literatures, and that its grammatical functions are limited to

³⁴ Text recited in Zu Shengli (2004/05), original text were: 崔世珍《单字解》说：“每”本音上声，频也：每年，每一个。又平声，等辈也：我每，咱每，俺每，恁每，你每。……今俗喜用‘们’字。”

personal pronouns and nouns indicating human beings, which also has the meaning of ‘every person’ embedded. However, he also reserved the probability that although the character *mei3* 每 was written in these colloquial literatures, its pronunciation then might be different from the modern pronunciation of *mei3*, and might possibly pronounced in neutral tone similar to -me or -m as of in the modern Beijing dialect. He also suspected that the neutral tone *me* in modern Beijing dialect was developed from the Middle Chinese suffix *mei3*.

Zhang Huiying 张惠英 (2001) suggested that *men* 们 might be simply derived from the character *men2* 们 and that the human radical was created to indicate its usage in human related nouns. She first proved that the monosyllabic suffix *jia* 家 in some Wu dialects, such as Changzhou 常州, Jiangyin 江阴, Yixing 宜兴, Liyang 溧阳, and Wenzhou 温州 (Chao Yuanren 1956, Zhang Huiying 2001), were originally the suffix for the singular form of personal pronouns “*wo3jia1* 我家 ‘I family’, *ni3jia1* 你家 ‘you family’, *ta1jia1* 他家 ‘he family’. Later, its usage extended after human related nouns, such as *lao3ren2jia1* 老人家 ‘old peoples’, *xiao3hai2zijia1* 小孩子家 ‘little kids’, *nü3ren2jia1* 女人家 ‘women’, etc.” In the semantic point of view, *jia1* 家 means ‘family, all relatives together’, so it is reasonable for *jia1* to become a personal pronoun

plural suffix. Zhang then suggests that *men2* 们 was developed in a similar way. She gave the following examples of *men2* 们 appeared in early colloquial literatures and operas.

(16) 他们取了富贵，做了好官。（道山清话，8 页，涵芳楼本说孚卷八二）

<He men took wealth, became good official.>

“They received wealth, (and) became good officials.”

(17) 你们只有一个日头活哩。（中兴战功录，11 页，藕香零拾本）

<You men only have one day live.>

“You (plural) only have one day to live.”

(18) 不须你们说，我自知了。（雨窗集，1 卷 6 页，鄞县马氏印）

<No need you men say, I self knew.>

“No need for you (plural) to say it, I myself already knew.”

(19) 尽他们劣，心肠偏有你。（赵长卿《惜奴娇》词，同上）

<End he men bad, heart slighted have you.>

“Though they are bad, but still thinking about you.”

(20) 看他们对插茱萸，恨长怨永。（王千秋《瑞鹤仙》词，同上）

<Look he men toward insert dogwood, hate long blame forever.>

“Look at them give dogwood to each other, keep complaining and blaming.”

(21) 但咱们，虽宦裔，总皆通。（《张协状元》戏文）

<But we men, though eunuch, always everything smooth.>

“But us, although are eunuchs, always knows everything.”

(22) 你读书莫学浪儿们一辈。（同上）³⁵

<You read book don't study loafer men one generation.>

“You study literatures don't learn those loafers.”

Many scholars including Lü Shuxiang (1985) believe that adding the human radical to *men2* 们 was the last step of the development of the modern Chinese suffix *men*

³⁵ Examples 1-3 quoted from Lu Shuxiang (1955), examples 4-8 quoted from Zhang Xiang (1977), which are re-quoted in Zhang Huiying (2001).

们. So there is no question regarding *men2* 们 being the former written form for *men* 们.

Zhang Huiying (2001) said that *man3* 满 , *man2* 瞒 , *men4* 懣 were paronyms of *men2* 们, but they were used to distinguish from the original meaning of the character *men2* 们 ‘door’. Furthermore, she said that *men2* and *mei3* were also paronyms, and proven with the Ming dynasty operas where these characters rhymes, and that in the Henan 河南 Lingbao 灵宝 and Shanxian 陕县 dialects, where *men2* and *mei3* still pronounced the same.

This once again in the same agreement with other scholars that *men* 们 was developed from Yuan dynasty’s *mei3* 每 or *men2* 们 , which was formerly *man2* 瞒, *man3* 满, or *men4* 懣 of the Song dynasty period, and *bei4* 辈 or *wei3* 伟 in the Tang dynasty. But I want to add that the Tang dynasty *bei4* 辈 was in fact the same character with the same function as in the Han dynasty Buddhist sutras translations. As I have mentioned in the previous session that *bei4* 辈 in Old Chinese is restricted to be used only after personal pronouns and nouns indicating human, so we can suggest that *bei4* 辈 of the Han dynasty literatures was the logical origin of the Middle Chinese plural suffix *bei4* 辈 as seen in Tang dynasty literatures, and it was later developed into the plural suffix *men* 们 in Modern Chinese.

Many scholars also argued about the origin of the *n* ending in *—men* 们 suffix.

Zu Shengli 祖生利 (2005/04) concluded that the major arguments regarding the origin of suffix *—men* were based on whether or not it originally has a nasal ending *—n*. One group of scholars suggested the *—n* ending was influenced by the Altaic language groups who have governed the land of Northern China, *—n* ending was commonly seen in Khitan language which is possibly the origin of the *—n* ending seen in today's *—men* suffix. Another group of scholar suggested the *—n* ending was originated in a Chinese dialect. In addition, it is still very puzzling that there was a repeated patterns of *mi2* 弭 > *men* 们 > *mei3* 每 > *men* 们 shown in the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasty literatures.

Lü Shuxiang (1985) suggested that *mei3* 每 and *men* 们 are pronoun suffixes belong to different dialectal groups during the Song dynasty period, *mei3* 每 was used in the North, and *men* 们 was used in the South. The characters *mi2* 弭, *ni2* 弥, *wei3* 伟, *men2* 们, and *mei3* 每 were the same functional word written in different form that were used in different period of time in different dialects. This hypothesis was confirmed by He Wei 贺巍 (1985) stating that some dialects in south western Henan 河南 province such as Lingbao 灵宝 and Shanxian 陕县, would still pronounce *men* 们 and *mei3* 每 the same. In addition to that, *mei3* 每 and *men* 们 were also pronounced the same in Ming

dynasty operas. For example, in the eighteen episodes of the *Story of Killing Dog* 《杀狗记》³⁶, there is a session that *mei3* 每 rhymes with *xing1* 惺. This is to indicate that *mei3* 每 has a $-n$ ending in the Ming dynasty, and it sounds similar to the character *xing1* 惺 which has a $-ŋ$ ending. In the dialects that $-n$ and $-ŋ$ are not distinguished, *mei3* 每 and *men* 门 has the same pronunciation, and they rhyme in the pronunciation of the Ming dynasty Chinese. This claim supported the idea that *mei3* 每 has a $-n$ ending in the Ming dynasty. But it is still not clear whether or not the $-n$ ending has already been there in the Yuan dynasty, which was governed and largely influenced by the Mongolians.

In fact, the plural suffix *mei3* 每 was also found in the translations of many Yuan dynasty colloquial tablets. The Mongolian language is clearly distinguished between singular and plural, the stem of a word is usually the singular form, and the additional part attached after the stem is the suffix. It is very common to see the suffix *mei3* 每 in the direct Chinese translation of the Mongolian tablets.

But the Yuan dynasty suffix *mei3* 每 is not exactly functioned as the Mongolian suffix. The major difference is that the Chinese *mei3* was restricted to be used after nominal nouns and personal pronouns, while on the other hand, the Mongolian suffix can be used after all nouns and partial pronouns, as well as adjectives, number words,

³⁶ Original text is: “(小生)不论告，由我每；不争竞，由我每。(净丑)全然不忖骂咱每，犹兀自假惺惺。”

adjective verbs, verbs, propositional verbs, etc.³⁷ There are still dialects in modern northern China that have similar broad functions of its plural suffix, I think it was probably an influence from the Mongolian language.

Lü Shuxiang (1985) thinks that it is not clear whether or not these reflected the Beijing dialects in the late Yuan and early Qing dynasty, more evidence need to prove this point. On the other hand, Ota (1953/1958) believes these are not just evidence from the literatures, they also reflected the original characteristics of the language at that time. Feng Chuntian (2000) also believes that these examples should be the reflections of the Northern dialects in the late Yuan and early Qing dynasty. Sun Xixin 孙锡信 (1990) believes that these usages of suffix are not originated in Chinese, but was a product of the influence of the outside language on Chinese which have left its evidence in the Chinese literatures. Mei Zulin (1986) also holds similar thoughts, as well as Li Chongxing, et al (2009).

The above scholars also believe that the grammatical function of adding suffix *men* 们 to the non-human nouns was a reflection of the real language usage in the Yuan

³⁷ Li Chongxing, Zu Shengli, and Ding Yong (2009):“蒙古语名词有单复数的区别，单数意义体现为词干形式，复数意义体现为词干后面粘接各种复数的附加成分。……白话碑文常用“每”来对译蒙古语名词等复数附加成分。汉语复数词尾“们”约产生于唐代，初或写作“弭”，“弥”，“伟”，宋代有“瞞”，“满”，“门”等形，元代一般写作“每”。但元代汉语复数词尾“每”与中古蒙古语复数附加成分并不对等，最重要的差别在于，前者只限于指人的名词和人称代词，而后者则不仅用于全体名词和部分代词，还用于形容词，数词，形动词，甚至动词，副词，后置词等。” (P137) The English translation is mine.

dynasty in the area of *Dadu* 大都³⁸, and that this usage was not originated in Chinese, but was a situation that called *Han'er Yanyu* 汉儿言语 ‘language of the Chinese learners’, which is a result of the influence of Mongolian language on Chinese. In fact, evidence are still perceived in the function of *men* suffix in some modern Northern dialects that have deep influence from the Altaic languages, such as Hebei Gaocheng 河北藁城 (Yang Naisi 杨耐思, et al. 1958), Gansu Lanzhou 甘肃兰州 (Huang Borong 黄伯荣, et al. 1960), Qinghai Xining 青海西宁 (Li Keyu 李克郁, 1987), Ledu 乐都 (Lei Hanqing 雷汉卿, 2008), Sanjingyuan area Chinese 三江源地区汉语 (Fang Liping 方丽萍, et al. 2008).

As we saw above, many scholars suspect the contact with the Khitan and Jurchen languages was an important factor in the development of the Chinese dialectal variety. This speculation has been proven by Shen Zhongwei 沈钟伟 (2011), by providing phonological comparisons between Middle Chinese, *Zhongyuan Yinyun* (ZYYY), *Menggu Ziyun* (MGZY), Jurchen script, and Khitan Lesser script. His finding concluded that the origin of modern Mandarin could trace back to the Liao and Jin dynasties. So that we can confirm that *mei3* 每 and *men* 们 were the different suffixes used in different dialects in the Song dynasty, because Song dynasty co-existed with the Liao and Jin dynasty (see the timelines of Chinese dynasties in Chapter 2 for details). Based on these

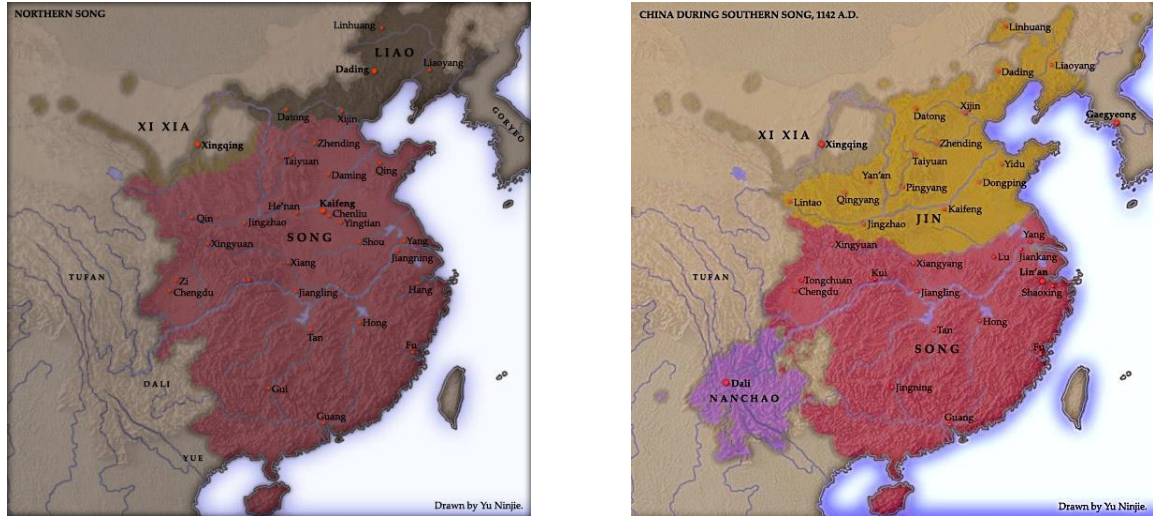
³⁸ Dadu of the Yuan dynasty is located in modern day Beijing.

information, we can claim that the plural suffixes being used in this period begins with the common initial – m.

Based on the phonetic values of the Tang dynasty plural marker *bei4* 輩 in Middle Chinese is *bu3mei4qie1* 補妹切, *xie4he2yi1qu4dui4bang1* 蟹合一去隊幫, so its reconstructed Middle Chinese pronunciation is * puoi. It did not have the nasal – n ending as proven from the phonological evidences. In another word, this means the – n ending of the plural suffix was appeared after Tang dynasty, and was most likely the result of language contact with the non-Chinese language(s), such as Khitan language of the Liao kingdom, the Jurchen of the Jin Kingdom, or the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty. One thing to be sure is that the – n ending has already appeared by the Yuan dynasty.

As we saw in the previous pages, the Song dynasty period suffixes *man2* 瞞 and *man3* 滿 were most likely paronym of *men2* 門, which means the – n ending first appeared during the Song dynasty period. Looking back to history, we know that the Chinese people of the Song dynasty only governed the southern part of China, at the same time, the Khitan people's Liao dynasty was located in the north western China, and the Jurchen people's Jin dynasty was located in the north eastern China. Following is a map of the governing powers during the Song dynasty period in China.

Figure 3. Map of China during the Song dynasty period³⁹



Linguistic evidences show us that, the plural suffixes in the Tang dynasty did not have a *-n* ending, but the *-n* ending was appeared in Song dynasty literatures. In addition, we saw from the previous section that northern China was governed by Khitan and Jurchen during the Song dynasty period, and these three groups had very close interactions with each other for years. Although history shown us that the Chinese people of the Song dynasty was relatively weak in military strength compared to the other two, but there was a significant amount of scholarly works produced in this period, which made the Chinese language the must learned language for the outsiders. The fact that, both the Khitan and Jurchen languages went extinct but there is still a huge population of Chinese speakers in modern days China, proven that Khitan and Jurchen speakers had learned the Chinese language and later considered themselves as Chinese people. The *-n* ending was most likely to be a trace of the language habit they brought into Chinese during the process of learning Chinese. This hypothesis is supported by Rayfield (1970),

³⁹ Wikipedia search keyword “Song dynasty”, result on July 28, 2013.

who predicted that structural changes due to L1 influence (in this case, L1 are Khitan and Jurchen) will be more frequent in the learner's version of the L2 (Chinese).

In addition, study has found that there were suffixes added to person's names in Khitan language of *Liao Shi* 《辽史》 'history of Liao', but due to the lack of information, the function of these suffixes are still unclear. However, according to Nie Hongyin 聂鸿音 (2001), there was such a definite complementary distribution that * – n should be agglutinated only to vowels "a, e, i, o", while * – in should be agglutinated only to vowel "u" or some other consonants. Therefore, it is logical that * – n ending was added to the plural suffix of personal pronouns, because the vowel before it is "e", so that – me became – men in the non-Chinese learners' version of Chinese. Nie also stated that these suffixes are also phonetically parallel to some Mongolian possessive suffixes, which show that these suffixation features were a characteristic of the Altaic languages. In comparison, there are also many modern Chinese dialects that use the possessive form to be the plural form of personal pronouns. Therefore, with these linguistic evidences, the – n ending can traced back to the Yuan dynasty's Khitan language.

Based on the above evidences, I suspect that the Han dynasty personal pronoun plural markers were introduced by non-Han languages through Buddhist texts translations, which were grammaticalized into suffixes in the Tang dynasty, and might have written as *mi2* 弭, *ni2* 弥, and *wei3* 伟 in different dialects. In addition, the m – initial was already developed in the Tang dynasty, which might have been from some Guanzhong dialects.

Later on, these suffixes might have written as *man2* 瞒, *man3* 满, and *men2* 们 in the Song dynasty period. During the process of non-Chinese speakers (Khitan and Jurchen) learning Chinese, the –n ending was brought over to Chinese as a habit in their native languages. Later on, the suffix was written as *mei3* 每 and *men* 们 in the Yuan dynasty. Because, the suffix *mei3* 每 was spoken by the southerners who were the native Han speakers, *men* 们 was the learners’ version of Chinese spoken in the north. Since the Yuan rulers were the only one who conquered all of China, and they forced the Chinese people to study Mongolian⁴⁰, thus the suffix *men* 们 became the standard form and continued to be so since then.

Once again, we can suggest that Chinese has gone through another process of language contact with non-Chinese languages in the Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties. The results of these language contacts might be: (1) the –n ending attached to the Middle Chinese plural suffix *bei4* 辈, since there is no evidence that the Tang and Han dynasty plural marker *bei4* 辈 has nasal ending; and (2) the function of the plural suffix has expanded from personal pronoun to human related nouns to all nouns in some dialects.

⁴⁰ Lin Tao (林焘, 2009): “The rulers of the Yuan dynasty forced the Han people to study Mongolian, a small number of Mongolian words such as ‘Hutong 胡同’ were adopted into the Dadu dialect at that time, and is still using in modern days. (元朝统治者强迫汉族人学蒙语，有少数蒙语词汇如‘胡同’等确实也被当时大都话所吸收，并且一直流传到今天。)”p103 of Yu Xiaorong, et al. (遇笑容, 2009). The English translation is mine.

In conclusion, all scholars agreed that Same Wording was the earliest form of representing the plural forms of personal pronouns in Old Chinese, and most of them believed that the plural suffixes was first appeared in the Tang dynasty literatures with a nasal initial m – . The – n ending of the plural suffix was developed when the Khitan and Jurchen speakers learned Chinese and left their language habit in the Chinese language. Thus we saw the appeared of the – n ending between the late Tang and Yuan dynasty, which attached to the Middle Chinese plural suffix and became men in Modern Chinese. The grammatical function of the suffix being used after non-human nouns is most likely to be an influence of the Mongolian language in the Yuan dynasty. In addition, based on the grammatical functions and the phonological and semantic evidence, I also suggested that the Tang dynasty plural marker *bei4* 辈 was most likely developed from the same character as seem in the Han dynasty translation of the Buddhist sutras during the early intervention of language contact with non-Chinese language. Thus, the development of the personal pronoun plural suffix in the Northern dialects can be display in the following table.

Table 6. The development of plural suffix – men in northern dialects

Time	Evidence	Plural Patterns
Old Chinese (Up to Han dynasty, < 220 A.D.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal pronoun singular form used as plural form Plural markers appeared in Han dynasty Buddhist Sanskrit translations: <i>cai2</i> 侪, <i>cao2</i> 曹, <i>shu3</i> 属, <i>deng3</i> 等, and <i>bei4</i> 辈 	Same Wording (plural markers not yet function as suffix)
Middle Chinese (post Han – Tang dynasty, 220A.D. -907 A.D.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tang dynasty plural suffixes: <i>mi2</i> 弭, <i>ni2</i> 弥, <i>wei3</i> 伟, <i>bei4</i> 辈 	Word Suffixation (suffix with [m-] initial)

Modern Chinese (post Tang-Qing dynasty, 907 A.D. -1911 A.D.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Song dynasty period plural suffixes: <i>mei3</i> 每, <i>man2</i> 瞞, <i>man3</i> 满, <i>men4</i> 懣 Yuan & Ming dynasty plural suffixes: <i>mei3</i> 每, <i>men2</i> 门/们 	Word Suffixation ([-n] ending appeared)
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CHAPTER 4

SOUND COMBINATION

We have seen in the previous chapter that Suffixation was the next pattern appeared after Same Wording. In the process, multisyllabic suffix might be added originally because of the content meanings. And then, for the convenience of communication, the multisyllabic suffix became a monosyllabic suffix. Later on, monosyllabic suffix abbreviated into a coda suffix, and completely lost its original meaning. When coda was attached to the singular form, it might be affected by the pronunciation of the singular forms and slightly changed its sound and were written in a new word. So Sound Combination is most likely the next step in the process of the development of personal pronoun plural forms. As I have mentioned before, there are two subcategories of Sound Combination which are Coda Suffixation and Tonal Changes.

4.1 Coda Suffixation

Coda Suffixation happened when the abbreviation of the monosyllabic suffix simplified into coda suffix and was attaching to the singular form of the personal pronoun. For example in the Min dialects, the plural forms of personal pronoun are indicated with the singular form and a –n coda. According to Jerry Norman (1983) and Mei Zulian (2000), the –n coda suffix in Min dialect was originally a word suffix *noŋ2* written as 侬, with the meaning of ‘people’. The plural forms of personal pronouns in Min dialects are *guan3* 阮 ‘we’, *lin3* 恁 ‘you plural’, *in1* 伊/因 (with 人 radical on the left) ‘they’, which are indeed the result of the sound combination and abbreviation of *gua3 noŋ2* 我

依 ‘I people’, li3 noŋ2 汝依 ‘you people’, i1 noŋ2 伊依 ‘he people’. Similar pattern of development was also found in Fuding 福鼎 and Longyan 龙岩 areas.

Sound combination is also seen in the Wu dialects. According to Li Rulong (1999), the three personal pronoun plural of Liyang 溧阳 are ʔŋo 伢 ‘we’, ʔŋio 绕 ‘you plural’, da ko 他家 ‘they’; in which ʔŋo 伢 is the sound combination of ŋ ko 我家 ‘I family’, ʔŋio 绕 is the sound combination of nyi ko 你家 ‘you family’.

Other than Sound Combination, there are many locations in the Wu dialects such as Wixi 无锡, Kunshan 昆山, and Shengze 盛泽, which add location word li3 里 to represent the plural form of personal pronouns. In some areas, because the influence of the nasal initial ŋ- of the first person singular form, the plural forms became a result of sound combination ɲi, such as ŋ ɲi 我侬 in Luodian 罗店 dialect, and ɲi 侬 in Suzhou 苏州 and Zhoupu 周浦 dialects.

Another location word *da1* 搭 is also often used in the Wu dialect, with a possible original pronunciation of da or ta. Due to the sound evolution, it is pronounced with a glottal stop -ʔ at the end or with a l- initial in some modern Wu dialects. Thus, there is a range of pronunciations in modern Wu dialects, such as ta, da, la, taʔ, aʔ, laʔ etc. For example, due to the characteristic of tone rising after the main vowel in Suzhou dialect, it is pronounced as toʔ 笃. The same suffix can appear after personal pronouns, as well as

in the location word *le toʔ* 勒笃 ‘at suffix’. Furthermore, Li Rulong claims that the plural form of personal pronoun *aʔ laʔ* 阿拉 in Zhoupu 周浦, Shanghai 上海, Yuyao 余姚, and Ningbo 宁波 dialect are the result of grammatically weaken from *ŋo* 我 to *aʔ* 阿, so *aʔ laʔ* 阿拉 was originally *ŋo laʔ* 我搭. In Songjiang 松江 dialect, *la* was affected by the prior pronunciation of first person singular, so became *na*. In areas like Jiaxing 嘉兴, Shuanglin 双林, Shaoxing 绍兴, Zhuji 诸暨, and Chongren 崇仁, the plural forms of personal pronouns were also a result of sound combination of first person singular and *la* which sounds similar to *ŋa*.

It is worth noting that some personal pronoun suffixes were originally location words as shown above. Li Rulong claimed the suffix *li3* 里 and *da1* 搭 are location words in the Wu dialects. Zhang Huiying (2001/2003) also claimed that the suffixes in modern Wu dialects *jia1* 家, *men* 们, and *li3* 里 are originally location words simply referring to *jia1* 家, *men2* 门, *li3* 里 meaning ‘a family’, ‘whole family/clan’, and ‘village’. Zhang Huiying (2001) further claimed the plural suffix of personal pronouns in Cantonese dialect *tei* 哋 was also derived from the location word *tei* 地 meaning ‘place’. In addition, she claims that the suffixes *to nin* 兜人 in Hakka dialect actually means *jia nin* 家

人'family members'. They are a set of paronym, and each dialect chose a different word as a choice.

There are many possibilities of how plural forms of personal pronouns were developed in each dialect. Some personal pronoun suffixes originally means 'person/people', such as '依' in the Min dialects. (Mei Zulin 2000) Some plural suffixes were originally the location or directional words in some dialects, such as Conghua, Zhongshan, and Zhuhai of the Yue dialects. (Zhang Huiying 1990) We can suggest that these suffixes were all have the meaning of 'people' or 'people at a certain place', which is most likely developed from the former plural markers that have the meaning of 'a group of people'. So once again, we see the semantic connection between the plural suffixes of Modern Chinese and the plural markers of Old Chinese.

It is most likely that the concept of adding plural markers were introduced into Chinese in the Han dynasty. At that time, there have been evidence of different groups of people lived in China, thus there were already different dialects or languages in Old Chinese. The people in Han dynasty learned the concept and chose the semantically familiar characters to represent the plural form of personal pronouns based on their dialectal characteristics and limitations. After many language contacts with non-Chinese speakers and other Chinese dialect speakers who tried to learned the standard Chinese dialect, these plural markers developed into suffixes in the complex patterns that we see today.

4.2 Tonal Change

In addition to sound combination of coda and the singular form of personal pronouns, many sub-dialects of the Yue dialect group also use Tonal Change 变调 to indicate the plural forms of personal pronouns, such as changing from tone 3 to 35 in Boluo 博罗白话 dialect, changing from tone 33 to 35 in Caobuqu 曹步区 of Guzhen 古镇 dialect, changing from tone 33 to 21 in Shaping 沙坪 and Yayao 雅瑶 dialects, changing from tone 13 to 51 in Zengcheng 增城 and Licheng 荔城 dialects, etc.

Among these Yue dialects that use Tonal Changes to represent personal pronoun plural, Taishan dialect 台山话 is a representative dialect, because of its linguistic characteristics and its wide influence in North America due to the large population of Taishan immigrants who were also the first group of Chinese immigrants to the United States.

Table 7. Personal pronouns of Taishan dialect

台山话	Singular	Plural
First Person	ŋɔi33	ŋɔi21
Second Person	ni33	niɛk21
Third Person	k'ui33	k'iek21

As shown in the table above, Taishan dialect uses dropping of tone from 33 to 21 in all three persons to represent the plural form of personal pronoun. In addition to that, the second and third person plural also added a –k coda suffix. The first personal plural does not have a –k coda suffix, which make it looks like an exception from the predicted

grammatical rule. Comparing to the other Siyi 四邑 dialects, including dialects spoken in Kaiping 开平, Enping 恩平, and Xinhui 新会, it is believed that the coda $-k$ was originally adopted in the first person plural as well. We can find evidence from previous study to proven this point.

According to Zhang Huiying (2003), the origin of the $-k$ coda was in fact the word suffix $-ko$ 个 ‘measure word’. The $-ko$ 个 pattern was originally the possessive marker which later became a plural marker. It is common for the possessive form of ‘personal pronoun singular + 个’ to become the plural form of personal pronouns in some Chinese dialects. Such evidences were found in Nanchang 南昌 of the Gan 赣 dialect group and Fu’an 福安 of the Min 闽 dialect group (Yuan Jiahua 袁家骅 1983, Xiong Zhenghui 熊正辉 1983).

According to Zhan Bohui 詹伯惠 and Zhang Risheng 张日升 (1988), the plural form of personal pronouns in the Siyi areas such as Doumen 斗门, Jiangmen 江门, Xinhui 新会 are: ηok 俾 ‘we’, $ni\epsilon k$ 佢 ‘you plural’, and $k'i\epsilon k$ 却 ‘they’, and these are in fact the sound combination of $\eta o ko$ 我个, $ni ko$ 你个, $kui ko$ 佢个. Because ko 个 in these dialects start with $k-$ initials, and this $k-$ initial later developed into the $-k$ coda attaching to the end of the singular form. Taishan dialect as part of the Siyi dialects is also believed to have the same kind of formation for the plural forms of personal

pronouns. Because of the 21 tone dropping was so short and sudden, the coda $-k$ sounds like silence in first person plural.

This once again proven that Coda Suffixation could be the result of the abbreviation of Word Suffixation, it happened because part of the word suffix (possibly the initial or the final) left out to be attached to the singular form. In addition, due to the linguistic characteristics of some dialects, such as the $-p, -t, -k$ endings in Yue dialects, Tonal Changes occurred because of the effect of the *ru* tone 入声 endings. Due to the effect of Coda Suffixation and Tonal Changes, some dialects would be written in New Wording to better represent its later pronunciation, as shown in the Taishan dialect.

It is not clear whether Coda Suffixation or Tonal Changes occurred earlier in the development of the plural forms of personal pronouns. It really depends on the dialect, as in Taishan dialect we saw in the previous page, Coda Suffixation probably occurred before Tonal Changes. But there are dialects that only use Tonal Changes to distinguish the plurality of personal pronoun, such as Guangdong Zengcheng 广东增城, the only difference is to change the tone from 13 in singular form to 51 in plural form.

Since there are many linguistic evidences that shown a great influence of Zhuang dialect 壮语 on the Yue dialect, so I was wondering if the tonal change feature was also influenced by the Zhuang dialect. According to Wei Qingwen 韦庆稳 & Tan Guosheng 覃国生 (1980), the personal pronouns in Zhuang dialects are as following.

Table 8. Personal pronouns of Zhuang dialect ⁴¹

	Singular	Plural
First person	kou ¹	tou ¹
Second person	muŋ ²	sou ¹
Third person	te ¹	kjoŋ ⁵ te ¹

From the table above, we see that difference between the singular and plural form of first person pronoun is the initial changed from k – to t – . Second person pronoun use New Wording pattern; it is impossible to find any connections between the singular and plural forms in just a glance. Third person pronoun chose to add a prefix. So there is not a systematic way of how plural forms are presented in Zhuang dialect’s personal pronouns, but one thing we can be sure is that Tonal Changes is not used in Zhuang dialect. So we can conclude that the plural forms of Yue dialects’ personal pronouns were not influenced by Zhuang dialects. This comparison shows us that lexical similarity in these dialects are far more common than grammatical similarity, which supports Rayfield (1970)’s prediction that “lexical borrowing from the L2 will be much more frequent than structural borrowing in the L1 of the learners”.

⁴¹ Wei Qingwen 韦庆稳 & Tan Guosheng 覃国生, Ed. Zhuangyu Jianzhi 壮语简志. Minzu Chubanshe. 1980. P36. The data was based on northern Zhuang dialect spoken in Wuming 武鸣 city, which is usually considered as the standard Zhuang dialect.

CHAPTER 5

COMPARISON WITH HANYU FANGYAN DITUJI

Comparing to the four major categories (Same Wording, Suffixation, Sound Combination, and Tonal Changes) of plural forms for personal pronouns in my analysis shown in the previous chapters, there are six patterns of representing personal pronoun plural in the Linguistic Atlas of Chinese Dialects (Hanyu Fangyan Dituji 汉语方言地图集, hereafter HFD) ed. 2008 compiled by Cao Zhiyun. The patterns are:

- (1) Same Wording as the singular form
- (2) Tonal Changes of the singular form
- (3) Tonal Changes of the singular form + plural suffix
- (4) Sound Combinations (meaning singular form + plural suffix)
- (5) Singular form + Sound Combination
- (6) Sound Combination + plural suffix

Because the data I collected are from the major dialect points, and that the data Cao compiled are also mostly major dialect points, so my result supports the display of the HFD.

However, the ways that I group the patterns are different, so there are still some slight differences between our results. For example, Taishan dialect was grouped in HFD as in the group of Suffixation with a suffix that has no particular meaning and cannot represent in a character, which is true. Because we saw in the Sound Combination section that the Taishan dialect uses the combination pattern of “Tonal Changes 21+ Coda Suffixation – k”, which should be pattern (6) in Cao’s analysis, to represent the plural

forms of personal pronouns. In comparison, Xinhui 新会 and Doumen 斗门 are grouped under Sound Combination, Enping 恩平 and Kaiping 开平 are grouped under Tonal Changes, but as we saw in the previous section, these dialects use the same pattern as in Taishan dialect, so they should all grouped in the same category. It is not clear why they were not recorded the same in HFD.

This comparison shows that languages and dialects are changing over time when in contact with other language or dialect, some changes are slow and some are rapid. Research regarding phonology has to be updated constantly in order to obtain the up to date information. In addition, we should see a range of development in the Chinese dialects by comparing the previous research to current research.

Needless to say, HFD as a great referential tool did an extensive and important contribution to the field of Chinese dialectology. In a simple glance, one can clearly understand that there are four major groups of plural suffixes for personal pronouns in Chinese: (1) The most commonly known suffix is men 们, (2) the suffixes that have the meaning of ‘person or people’; (3) the suffixes that have the meaning of ‘more than one or many’, and (4) the suffixes that are function words which can appear in many forms. This part of the result is also supported with my result.

This paper have covered a little of each group listed above. But, due to the insufficient written evidence of Old Chinese and Middle Chinese in other dialects, I only provided a relatively informative study of the suffix men 们. More studies should be done

in order to have a better understanding of the plural forms of personal pronouns in Modern Chinese.

Looking at the map display of the plural forms of personal pronouns below, we can see a general pattern that north and western dialects are most likely to have –men suffix, except the areas next to the mouth of the Yellow River which use Same Wording pattern, there is also many northern dialects that use the pattern of “Sound Combination + Plural Suffix”. On another hand, the southern dialects are more likely to add suffixes that (1) have the meaning of people (in blue color), (2) have the meaning of more than one (in green color), or (3) functional suffixes (in yellow color).

This supports Hashimoto (1984)’s claim that because of language contact, there is a step-by-step typological transition of Chinese dialects from north to south. The Chinese dialects in the north were influenced by Altaic languages, while the Chinese dialects in the south were influenced by a great variety of languages. Thus there are fewer tonal distinctions and simpler syllable structure remains in the northern dialects. He attributed the cause of this typological graduation to Altaic (non-tonal with simple syllable structure) influence in the north, and Austro-Asiatic (with multiple tones and complex syllable structure) influence in the south.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

All scholars agreed that the singular form was also used as plural forms for personal pronouns in Old Chinese, so that Same Wording is the earliest pattern of representing plural. In addition, there has been evidence of plural markers being used after personal pronouns in Han dynasty translation of Buddhist Sutras. Although scholars do not agree that the plural markers appeared in these translations were suffixes—because these markers still have their original meanings of “people in this group”—but there is no doubt that the concept of Suffixation was in fact a result of language contact with Sanskrit or other languages.

It is possible that some of these former plural markers extinct in the process of language evolution, but it is also very possible that some of them remained and evolved along with the languages over the years.

Following the same logic of thinking, it is very likely that the other Han dynasty plural markers *cai2* 侪, *cao2* 曹, *shu3* 属 and *deng3* 等 were also adopted into different Chinese dialects and developed into many different forms in modern Chinese. Based on the phonological similarities, *shu3* 属 might have been the earlier form of *du* 笃 in some Wu dialects; *deng3* 等 could be the earlier form of *dou1* 兜, *ding1* 丁, *duo1* 多 in some Hakka dialects (Li Rulong 1999, Dai Zhaoming 2003).

After the Han dynasty, there was a long periods of unstable power switching until the Sui 隋 and Tang 唐 dynasties. Most scholars agreed that the origin of the plural suffix

–men 们 in modern northern dialects were from the Tang dynasty plural suffix *bei4* 辈.

I think that the Tang dynasty plural suffix *bei4* 辈 was the same *bei4* 辈 as the Han dynasty plural marker. Because they have the same written form and the same grammatical functions, thus I believe that the plural marker *bei4* 辈 was grammaticalized somewhere between the Han and Tang dynasty, and the m – initial was probably originated in the northern Chinese dialects in Middle Chinese. After many years of language contacts with non-Chinese languages in the Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties, the –n ending occurred when those non-Chinese speakers who learned Chinese and brought in their native language habits. So this proven that Altaic languages largely influenced the northern Chinese dialects.

This kind of linguistic situation that involves the agentivity of source language speakers (non-Chinese speakers) who impose their L1 habits on the recipient or target language (Chinese) was called “Imposition” (Van Coetsem, 1988), but more commonly known as “language shift”. Due to “the universal tendency toward simplification of target structures”⁴², the personal pronoun plural suffix in Chinese became simpler over time. Thus, we saw that some dialects’ plural suffix developed in the order of from multisyllabic to monosyllabic, to coda suffixation.

Hashimoto (1976) observed that the further north a Chinese dialect is located, the fewer tonal distinctions and the simpler syllable structure the dialect maintains. He attributed the cause of this typological graduation to Altaic influence in the north and Austro-Asiatic influence in the south. In addition, Charles N. Li (1995) claimed that

⁴² Donald Winford (2003), p16.

Tibetan languages have influenced some dialects in western China. This might explained why the plural forms of personal pronoun are phonologically simpler in the north, and comparatively more complex in the southern dialects.

Referring to the scholars cited in this paper, I suggest that the concept of Suffixation to represent the plural forms of personal pronouns originated from a non-Chinese language(s) which can trace back to the Han dynasty's plural markers such as *bei4* 輩. These plural markers were adopted into different dialects, and were later became grammaticalized in the Tang dynasty as possibly *m* – initial suffixes in some dialects. Then, again after the language contacts with other Altaic languages, such as the Khitan of the Liao dynasty, Mongolian in the Yuan dynasty, the *m* – initial plural suffixes obtained the – *n* ending due to the Altaic language influence.

This kind of evidence due to language contact could have been a language habit of the bilingual speakers of Chinese and Altaic Language. In the process of learning Chinese, they brought the typical grammars from their native language to Chinese, and because they were the leaders and being on top of the social ranking, thus it was normal for their fellow Chinese commoners to reduplicate the way of their speech.⁴³

Based on the available written evidences, we can only conclude that the concept of adding plural markers to indicate the plural forms of personal pronouns was first appeared in Han dynasty literatures, and possibly grammaticalized as plural suffixes in Tang dynasty, and developed further and finally appeared as – *men* in northern Chinese dialects. But we do not have enough evidence to explain the development of all the plural

⁴³ Jerry Norman (2009), p63 of Yu Xiaorong, et al. (遇笑容, 2009).

patterns. Therefore, we can only conclude that there are four major patterns of personal pronoun plurals in Chinese:

- (1) Same Wording;
- (2) Suffixation, (Multisyllabic Suffixation and Monosyllabic Suffixation);
- (3) Sound Combination (Coda Suffixation and New Wording);
- (4) Tonal Changes.

The above processes could happen more than once in a particular dialect, especially if the target dialect has a high frequency of language contacts with source language/dialect. This also explains why we can still perceived in some modern Chinese that use the form of “Sound Combination + Suffixation”⁴⁴ to represent its personal pronoun plural, or even have two different ways to indicate personal pronoun plurals. The possible explanation was the earlier pattern was developed after the former influence, and the later pattern was developed after a later influence.

⁴⁴ Locations shown in Chinese Fangyan Dituji are: Weichang 围场, Fengnng 丰宁, Changli 昌黎, Anguo 安国, Han’erbin 哈尔滨, Huainan 淮南, etc. over 39 dialects.

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